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Gallery and Studio

THE "MADONNA DEI CANDELABRI."



THE "Madonna dei Candelabri," a picture ascribed to Raphael, and the composition of which is undoubtedly his, is now on exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum, to which institution it has been lent for a period of six months. We have it on the express

authority of the Director of the Museum that it is, or was, the intention of a number of rich men to purchase it for presentation to the Museum, nor can there be any reasonable doubt that the only object its owner had in bringing it to this country was to sell it. Nor can we see why the fact should be so obstreperously denied, as it is in certain quarters, as if it were something to be ashamed of. It has already been offered for sale at auction by its present owner; it was sent to Paris to be sold, if possible, there; it was exhibited at South Kensington in the hope, doubtless, that the government would buy it; and, as I have said, it is reasonable to believe that it has been brought here for the same purpose. The price mentioned in connection with it—\$200,000—is, however, so absurdly exaggerated for a picture in such bad condition, and of such doubtful authenticity—not a single writer of repute, nor any writer that I know of, giving it entirely to Raphael, and some, Kugler and Muntz, for example, denying it to be his painting at all—that it is not to be wondered at if public opinion is found rapidly crystallizing to the conclusion that it would not be wise to buy the picture for any money. And perhaps this conclusion is strengthened by the suspicious way in which the valuation at \$200,000 (£40,000) became fixed upon the picture—I mean by the remarkable proceedings at the sale of the Munro collection in London, in 1878. But I need not dilate upon this portion of the subject, seeing that there is now, it may be hoped, no intention on the part of any one to add another doubtful treasure to our unfortunate Museum.

The picture arrived too late to be described in the January number of *THE ART AMATEUR*. A reception was held at the Museum on the 11th of December from 2 P.M. to 4 P.M., when the picture was exhibited to persons holding cards of admission; but in order to enable a large number of spectators to see it at once—the shortness of the time not admitting a close examination by individuals—the picture had to be hung so high that it could not be well seen, and the work is so ineffective as a show-piece that the general impression under these circumstances could only be one of disappointment. Great interest was, nevertheless, shown in the painting, and it can easily be understood by any one who was present, why Mr. Hubert Herkomer should have said, in his letter to *The Tribune*, that he was more interested in the spectators than in the picture. For, looking down the rows of well-dressed, well-to-do people, chiefly women, who were seated before the painting, it was easy to fancy one's self in a church, such was the sincere, wholly unconscious, look of devotion in the faces. If one reflected how impossible it would be to reproduce such a scene in London or in Paris, where "Raphaels" have long been a thing of custom, the provincial character of New York, in spite of her size and pretensions, was seen to be somewhat naïvely betrayed—a great many of the persons present were looking at what they supposed to be a great picture by a great master for the first time in their lives. That they were mistaken does not affect the meaning of the scene. It was a pleasant witness to the perennial charm of art.

The picture has since been removed to the Eastern Gallery up-stairs, and placed where it can be seen conveniently, and to the best advantage. We are much mistaken if the general verdict, could it be impartially got at, would not be found to be that the picture is a most

disappointing one; disappointing every way—as a composition, as a piece of painting, and for the treatment of the subject. No doubt, the general lines of the composition are due to Raphael, and were it not for the unfortunate introduction of the attendant angels, the composition would be every way worthy to be compared with that of the *Madonna della Sedia*, but, farther than this, it may be said without fear of contradiction from any respectable authority, Raphael's share in the picture now at the museum, has not gone. His hand painted no part of it. Could it be shown that he did paint it, it would be necessary to admit that in this one instance, at least, he painted far from well. It does not need any considerable amount of connoisseurship, nor even an uncommon perception in the technics of painting, to perceive that this is not beautiful workmanship—that the face of the Virgin is deficient in modelling; that the hair of the Child is not hair in texture and does not grow like hair; that his body is a sack filled with melted tallow; that his eyes are without beauty of form and have no inward light, the pupil being merely a dark unrelieved circle of paint crowded into one corner, so that the white only shows on one side; and that the mouth of the Child is so painted as to give the unpleasant impression of a grin, the teeth not seen, and the tongue just showing between the parted lips. The most unfortunate feature of the picture, whether as regards its composition or its painting, is the introduction of the two angels. These are not only crowded into the composition in a very awkward fashion, but they are in themselves ill-designed and worse painted. Can any one, indeed, who knows anything about painting, fail to see that these two heads are unworthy of any master; that they are mere wig-blocks with the wigs on them, the hair of the one on the spectator's right, especially, looking as if it might be lifted off what Mr. J. C. Robinson describes as the "high, empty forehead"?* This same distinguished connoisseur, speaking of the way in which the picture has suffered at the hands of the restorers, says that the right hand of the angel on the spectator's left, which once occupied the space just above the corner of the cushion on which the Child sits, has wholly disappeared in the destructive cleaning to which the picture has been subjected at a comparatively recent date. The restorer went too far, taking away not only "the numerous coats of varnish which it had in the course of centuries received, and all the ancient restorations and repaintings, but probably with them more or less of the painter's original work."

It was in the course of this process, probably, that the hand in question disappeared, and Mr. Robinson points out that the restorer, seeing what a gap was left in the composition by its absence, attempted to fill it by painting in its place the end of the torch-handle, but, in doing this, he made matters worse, as anybody can see; for, while the upper part of the torch appears behind the head of the angel, the lower part is seen in front of his body, so that the only way in which he can be supposed to hold the torch is as a man sometimes carries a walking-stick, holding it upright, thrust under his arm and with the hand that holds it thrust in his overcoat pocket. If the visitor to the Museum will study the design of these so-called candelabra he will find that it is of a commonplace, not to say mean, character. The upper portion from which the flame springs is not merely coarsely painted, but is without character in its mouldings, while the ends are to be compared to nothing but to our every-day feather-dusters. Raphael does not, it is true, often introduce accessories such as these into his pictures, but whenever he does, as in the chairpost with its fringes and embroidered back-rest in the "Madonna della Sedia" or the chair, the hand-bell, and the illuminated missal in the "Leo X.," of the Pitti, he takes pains to design them well. But in the

present picture the candelabra, important as they are, cannot be said to be designed at all. It may be that the notion of the attendant angels bearing torches was suggested by the angels which Nicolo dell' Arca and Michael Angelo designed for the tomb of St. Dominic in the Church of St. Domenico at Bologna, but in dignity and appropriateness the painter's conception falls short of that of the sculptors. And Raphael himself has showed in the ceiling of the Chigi Chapel in Rome how sweetly he could conceive the image of a torch-bearing child.* Yet there can be no doubt, apparently, that these angels, awkwardly as they are placed in the picture, are yet an integral part of the original composition, and not, as has been suggested, a later addition by another hand. On this point, Mr. Robinson speaks without hesitation. "The notion," he says, "that the two angels' heads were an after addition to the composition, cannot be sustained for a moment. . . . Careful examination of the Novar picture, moreover, renders it certain that no matter by whose hand the heads in question were actually painted, they were, at all events, executed contemporaneously with the rest of the picture." In several of the engravings that have been made from this picture, the angels have been omitted, but this is due only to a whim of the engravers.

In connection with this picture we have had, since it came to this country, an amusing illustration of the way in which legends grow. Some years ago, no one knows where, somebody, no one knows who, made up a pretty tale about the *Madonna della Sedia*, narrating, circumstantially, how the first sketch for it was drawn by Raphael in the street with a bit of charcoal on the end of a barrel, the attitude of a peasant woman, sitting by the wayside with one child in her arms and another at her knee, having given him the motive. It mattered not that circular compositions had been produced since the beginning of time, and that they had long been the fashion, as it were, in Italy. Perugino, Boticelli, and Michael Angelo himself had painted circular compositions of the Holy Family, but no one ever suggested a barrel in their case. Nor did any one ever say of the *Madonna della Sedia* that the picture itself was painted on the end of a barrel, nor does any one believe to-day that even the sketch was ever so drawn. The story is not only without any historical foundation, but is in the highest degree improbable, and altogether foreign to what we read of Raphael's manners. But there was the story, and no sooner had the picture been seen here than a newspaper reporter started the theory that it might have been painted on the other end of the same barrel on which the *Madonna della Sedia* had been painted! This was ingenious, but it was soon outdone by another member of the fraternity who announced, after an examination of the picture at the museum, that the panel was surrounded by a barrelhoop (!) which fact, he thought, might account for the story that the picture had been painted on the end of a barrel—there never having been, as I have said, any such story! And this in New York City.† Reading such things in our best newspapers makes it less surprising that in the very museum, and, I believe, in the very room where this picture, purporting to be by Raphael, is hung with so much ceremony, there should be allowed to hang such an unblushing travesty of Raphael as "The Adoration of the Shepherds," No. 29. Yet how can that be rightly called a travesty which does not even pretend to imitate a single characteristic of the master?

If any person, who is in whatever degree competent to form a judgment on pictures, would faithfully study the *Madonna dei Candelabri*, and say about it exactly what he thinks, I cannot but believe that the result, on the whole, would be a very different one from that which

* See Plate IX. of *The Mosaics of the Cupola in the "Cappella Chigiana"* of Sta. Maria del Popolo in Rome. Engraved and Edited by Lewis Gruner, London, 1850. The mosaic is dated 1516. The *Madonna dei Candelabri* is supposed to have been painted between 1513-1520.

† Springer in his "Raffael und Michelangelo," Leipsic, 1877, has discussed the whole question. This author suggests that the story is no older than the last century. See p. 217.

* Memoranda on the *Madonna dei Candelabri* by Raffaele. By J. C. Robinson, F.S.A., London: J. Rimell & Son, 400 Oxford Street, 1878. Mr. Robinson, one of the most experienced connoisseurs of our time, was formerly superintendent of the Art Collection at South Kensington, and now holds the responsible position of Surveyor of Her Majesty's Pictures.



CHARCOAL STUDY.

DRAWN FROM LIFE IN HOLLAND BY GEO. H. BOUGHTON.

is arrived at, by all of us saying what we think will be expected of us. Were every one to say honestly what he thinks about this picture, how many would find "sublimity" in this Virgin's face? There is nothing there but a total lack of expression or sentiment of any kind. The reader will remember what Thackeray said about "La Belle Jardinière": "I hate those simpering Madonnas. I declare that the Jardinière is a puking, smirking Miss with nothing heavenly about her." This Virgin is nothing so positive as that—she is vapidly in person. And when we read of "the Child with sparkling joy and freshness in his eyes, and the freedom of childhood in a head of glorious hair tangled, but tossing every way," we wish the writer joy of his power to see what is not to be seen, and to become so enthusiastic over it. A true knowledge and a lasting enjoyment of art do not come this way. A healthy criticism tries to see things as they really are.

CLARENCE COOK.

ART IN PHILADELPHIA.

EXHIBITIONS OF THE SOCIETY OF ARTISTS AND THE SOCIETY OF ETCHERS.

THE Philadelphia Society of Artists is now holding its fourth annual exhibition at its galleries in Chestnut Street. This society started the fashion of holding autumn and winter exhibitions in Philadelphia—that is to say, exhibitions of original works contributed by the artists themselves—and in that and other particulars it has done much to advance art interests. The majority of its members are young and energetic men who are not only capable of making an attractive and varied display of their own works, but who are in sympathetic relations with the younger men of New York and other cities, and are consequently able to command, for their exhibitions, the best contemporary performances. The exhibition now in progress is the best that has thus far been held under the auspices of the society. It contains some canvases which can really be called important, while a very high average of excellence has been achieved. Few of the works can fairly be said to be so poor as to be unworthy of respectful critical consideration, while a large majority of them are marked by positive qualities of superiority.

As many of their pictures have but recently been shown in New York and Brooklyn, and some of the most important among them, such as Mr. Hovenden's "Elaine" and his very admirable study of an old negro, Mr. Weir's "Flowers," and Percy Moran's "Studio," have already been mentioned in THE ART AMATEUR, such a detailed notice of the collection, as would be called for under other circumstances is scarcely necessary. The largest canvases devoted to figure subjects, other than Mr. Hovenden's picture above referred to, are F. D. Millet's portrait of Lawrence Barrett in the character of "Cassius," Fred James's study of a Canadian Indian fisher-girl, and Constant Mayer's full-length study of a boy which he entitles "The Truant's Remorse," as if a truant ever felt remorse except when he had a certainty of an interview with Dr. Birch fairly in prospect. The title of Mr. Mayer's work cannot be considered remarkably happy, but the picture is one of the best, by this artist, that has ever been shown in Philadelphia. Mr. James's fisher-girl is not handsome, but the picture has merit. And so has Mr. Millet's portrait of Barrett, although the most important part of it—the face—is unfortunately the least meritorious part. It is singular that an artist, who can paint drapery and accessories as well as they have been painted in this instance, cannot paint the human face divine without making it call to mind one of those famous Herald war-maps. Another goodly sized canvas that is entitled to particular notice, because of its merits, is E. H. Blashfield's "Music." This represents a damsel with a dulcimer, and a stretch of marble wall with a bit of foliage beyond and other accessories. The composition is very simple, and while it cannot be said that the picture expresses any particular idea, musical or otherwise, it is, nevertheless, an uncommonly pleasing work—a good deal more pleasing both as regards matter and manner than Mr. Blashfield's Roman pictures exhibited a few seasons ago. More interesting than any of these large canvases are C. Y. Turner's "Afternoon Tea," and "The Days that are no More." The latter, a representation of a widow and her orphaned boy leaving a graveyard, is a thoroughly charming work. It strikes a chord of sentiment without

twanging it. Among the other figure studies worthy of note, on account of their superior qualities, are a representation of a couple of young flower merchants arranging their wares for market by Leon Delachaux, which is entitled, "For who [!] are These?" a very refined little representation of a young girl in classical costume by Miss Mary K. Trotter, entitled, "Fastening the Girdle;" bright, sketchy little studies for which very pretty girls have posed as models, by Leon and Percy Moran; "Watching at the Gate"—the title of which is or ought to be sufficiently descriptive—by W. H. Lippincott, and a couple of very attractive pictures—"Blackberrying," and "First at the Tryst"—by C. Morgan McIlhenney, in which both figures and landscapes are painted with a great deal of refinement. Gilbert Gaul has two goodly sized canvases devoted to warlike themes, one entitled "Silenced," which shows the dead visited by the glimpses of the moon, and the other "Soldiers on a Picket Station," not failing to have a very good time of it in spite of the cold weather. These have much merit, but they are scarcely as attractive either in matter and manner as less ambitious performances of the same artist which have figured in recent exhibitions.

As is usual in American exhibitions the landscapes are in the majority, and average better as regards quality than do the figure pieces. The most showy landscapes are those of W. L. Picknell, who contributes four canvases. All of them are superior works—one entitled "Crossing the Bar," representing a brawny and sun-burned fisherman fastening his boat, being the most effective if not the most meritorious—although they seem to indicate that Mr. Picknell is master of but one scheme of color. Prosper L. Senat, who appears to have been under Mr. Picknell's influence of late—and not to his disadvantage—exhibits several representations of scenery in the neighborhood of Campobello. The largest, and all things being considered, the best of Mr. Senat's works is entitled "Summertime in the Land of Weirs," a picture which is a delight if only for the sake of its limpid and breathable atmosphere. It will not do, however, to judge a picture by its size; otherwise but scant justice would be done to such a lovely work as the "Gray Autumn," of J. Francis Murphy. This is not only the best of several pictures contributed by Mr. Murphy to the exhibition, but it is the best landscape by any hand in the exhibition. There is just a suggestion of Corot, which would seem to indicate that Mr. Murphy has intelligently studied the works of that master, while it has in it that which does not belong to any man except the painter of it. Other landscapes which are marked by positive qualities of excellence, have been contributed by M. F. H. De Haas, Thomas B. Craig, H. Bolton Jones, W. Sartain, James B. Sword, Bruce Crane, W. P. W. Dana, Clifford P. Grayson, H. R. Poore, Peter Moran, Arthur Quartley, and others.

While the Philadelphia Society of Artists is holding its fourth annual exhibition at its galleries in Chestnut Street, the Philadelphia Society of Etchers is making its first venture in a similar way at the Academy of the Fine Arts. This exhibition is limited to the works of contemporary etchers—a limitation which is to be regretted for a number of reasons, and particularly because such a display of the best works of the best etchers of all ages and all schools as could have been made would certainly have assisted in interesting the general public in an art concerning which there are many popular misunderstandings. The collection, however, is a very interesting one as it stands, and it is an exceedingly adequate representation of the accomplishments of the modern etchers. Contributions have been received direct from many prominent American and European practitioners with the needle and the acid, while the rich collections of James L. Claghorn and others have been freely drawn upon. The English School of Etching is represented by notable works by Seymour Haden, Whistler, Wilfred Ball, and other artists of repute; while the works of continental masters bear all or nearly all the names of noted artist etchers. Without disparagement to the admirable qualities of the English works, it must be said that an adequate understanding of the resources of the etching process can only be obtained by an examination of the performances of the French, Spanish, and Italian artists. Not only this, but these continental works, whether they be but slight scratches on the copper or elaborate light and shade studies, seem to tell something not merely about the importance of an artist having a clear understanding with regard to what he intends to do before he begins, but

about his having a distinct understanding about what had best be done. These works range from such rapid but wonderfully effective sketches as Felix Buhot's representations of rainy and sunny days in Paris, and A. Piccinni's brilliant little sketches of a group at a theatre, a group in church, and so on, to such elaborate performances as C. E. Jacque's "Sheep in Stable"—a treatment of the subject as exhaustive in its way as a painting by the artist would be—and C. Maccari's "Good Samaritan," in which the tones range from the pure white of the flame of a lantern to the intensest black, or such elaborate performances in rivalry of burin work as P. Rajon's portraits of Cardinal Newman and Charles Darwin. The collection also contains numerous examples from the hands of such celebrated painters as Bastien-Lepage, Berne-Bellecour, L. Bonnat, Benjamin Constant, C. F. Daubigny, E. Detaille, Fortuny, Gérôme, Meissonier, Millet, and Rousseau.

The American exhibit is unexpectedly good and contains a considerable number of highly meritorious plates. Stephen Parrish is the most ambitious among the American etchers and exhibits several very large plates, which are devoted mainly to subjects selected on the New England coast. These are apt to be somewhat scattered in composition, and the artist has not always been successful in achieving tone harmonies, but when all allowances for shortcomings are made there is much in them that commands hearty admiration. Joseph Pennell is the one among the American etchers who appears to have the greatest feeling for the picturesque, and many of his plates are not only entitled to great praise for the simplicity and directness of their execution, but for the skill with which much has been made of very commonplace objects. Among the other American artists, who have contributed noteworthy works, may be mentioned A. F. Bellows, F. S. Church, Henry Farrer, Gerome Ferris, Stephen J. Ferris, John Gaugengigl, R. Swain Gifford, Mrs. Emily Moran, Mrs. M. Nimmo Moran, Thomas Moran, Peter Moran, James Simpson, James D. Smillie, C. A. Vanderhoof, and Kruseman Van Elten. This exhibition is well worthy of a visit from all who are at all interested in the art of etching, or who want to be informed with regard to its capabilities.

SIGMA.

FANS AND FAN PAINTING.

CONCLUSION.

BUT, after all, the legitimate and indeed the only perfectly beautiful fan is that with a vellum or swan's skin or goose skin mount. It is most interesting on account of the importance of the paintings that can be executed upon these materials, which are by far the most durable of any used for the purpose. Swan's skin and goose skin have a grain which gives the right texture for flesh, and it does not shrink in mounting. But it is imported and not easy to obtain. Vellum may be obtained from your bookbinder. With this material there is nothing to hinder the minutest, the most highly finished, the most perfectly executed work. A vellum fan is often stippled with as much labor and finish as an ivory miniature. Any subject, no matter how complicated, can be attempted. As this kind of fan, however, ought to last for one or two hundred years, it is wise to choose a subject that is either mythological or taken from the works of a great master. A subject of the present period would probably have no interest, nor any value whatever, a few generations hence.

A moderately soft lead pencil is used for drawing on vellum. The outline should be done very delicately, and the false marks may be effaced, without much rubbing, with some stale bread crumb. It is better, if you transfer, to use the tracing paper with black lead on the back, rather than the blue or red papers. Care must be taken not to lean on the ivory tracing point while transferring. It would then make an indented mark in the vellum, and interfere with the painting. Some pretty medallions are done upon vellum. In general the centre one is from 2½ to 3½ inches high, by 4 or 4½ inches in width. The medallions on each side of this one are a great deal smaller. In the middle one there is a subject, and in the other two either monograms, trophies, or emblems. These paintings are often done in pink or blue monochrome, or as "grisailles," to make the fans match with the ladies' dresses.

"Monochrome," as the reader probably knows, is